

**STRATEGIC PLANNING  
SUSTAINABILITY &  
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

**12 JULY 2018**

**Solutions to Operation Stack, public information exercise update**

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transportation Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service/Lead Director</b>	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning & Development
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Stuart Watson, Planning Officer (Strategic Planning)
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

**Executive Summary**

Highways England are currently looking at ways to improve traffic congestion created by extraordinary cross-Channel disruption, and they are looking for views on proposed approaches to develop one or more lorry holding areas to reduce the congestion it causes in Kent. This report provides a summary of the public information exercise and puts forward proposed responses to the issues relevant to Maidstone Borough.

**This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. That the responses set out in paragraphs 1.8 to 1.14 of this report be agreed as a basis for the Councils response to the Highways England public information exercise - Solutions to Operation Stack: managing freight traffic in Kent.

**Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee	12 July 2018

# Solutions to Operation Stack, public information exercise update

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Due to significant and prolonged disruption in summer 2015, Operation Stack was in place for over 30 days. In response, the Government instructed Highways England (HE) to develop plans for a new lorry holding area to avoid the worst impacts of Operation Stack.
- 1.2 In July 2016 the Government announced a proposal for a lorry holding area located near Stanford in Kent. HE carried out a public consultation over the summer and in October 2016 the decision to select Stanford West became the subject of a judicial review.
- 1.3 In November 2017, following legal advice, the Government withdrew this initial proposal and at the same time instructed HE to explore the development of a lorry holding area solution through the normal planning process. Further, the Government have also asked HE to consider the need for additional lorry parking in Kent, and whether the lorry holding areas could include additional border control facilities maybe required after the UK leaves the European Union.
- 1.4 HE are currently holding an early stage public information exercise that offers respondents the opportunity to give their views to the proposed approach to develop one or more lorry holding areas by responding to a questionnaire. The information exercise is currently running with responses being able to be submitted up to the 11.59pm on Sunday 22 July 2018. Documents to the public information exercise, including the responses questionnaire can be view at:  
<https://highwaysengland.co.uk/projects/solutions-to-operation-stack-managing-freight-traffic-in-kent/>
- 1.5 The HE public information exercise discusses lorry holding areas solutions, including the benefits and disadvantages of on and off road locations (table 1).

<b>On road solution</b>	
<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
Holding enough lorries to avoid most activations of operation stack in one or more locations ensuring flexible responses that could provide all users with additional road capacity at other times, and would be less visually intrusive than a off road holding area	Could require large areas of land with wide impacts on communities, businesses and the environment/landscape. There are no existing welfare facilities for lorry drivers and would be difficult to provide additional facilities to support 24 hour lorry parking. May require extensive works to existing bridges or roads and not

	necessarily quicker to construct than an off road solution.
<b>Off road solution</b>	
<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
Would hold enough lorries in one or more locations to avoid most activation of operation stack and ensure resilience to disruption. It could provide welfare solutions for lorry drivers and additional facilities to support everyday 24-hour lorry parking. Construction works are less likely to disrupt motorways and other roads.	Could require large areas of land with significant area specific impacts on communities, businesses and the environment/landscape. Could require new motorway or major road junctions or improvements to existing junctions. If the site incorporates everyday 24-hour lorry parking and/or border control facilities that site maybe in use all day every day.

**Table 1. Summary of lorry holding areas solutions benefits and disadvantages**

- 1.6 At present HE are developing temporary traffic management measures for use on the M20 in the event of congestion caused by the cross-channel travel disruption, and there will be available by March 2019. HE states that unlike operation stack the temporary measures will ensure that the M20 remains open to traffic in both directions while managing lorry traffic heading towards the ports. The temporary measures will only be used as necessary, and would affect the capacity of the M20 between junctions 8 and 9 for non-freight traffic. During the temporary measures a lower speed limit would be required but would ensure that non freight traffic would continue to follow. The temporary measurers are not subject to the public engagement exercise, which focuses purely on the permanent solutions.
- 1.7 Responses to the HE public information exercise can be submitted through a questionnaire or online survey. The response forms contain 18 questions of which 15 are multiple choice ranging from personal details and opinions to comment boxes on lorry holding area solutions. The following paragraphs contain the questions considered most relevant to Maidstone Borough and recommendations for comments that will form the Council's response.
- 1.8 **Question 4:** How does traffic congestion caused by an activation of Operation Stack during periods of cross-Channel disruption affect you? (Please tick all boxes that apply).
- Response:** Boxes for ticking: As a local resident, As a local business, As a local road user, As a motorway user
- 1.9 **Question 5:** Operation Stack addresses congestion caused by lorries during periods of cross-Channel disruption. To what extent, do you agree or disagree with the need for an alternative solution? (Please tick one box).
- Response:** Box for ticking, Strongly agree
- 1.10 **Question 6:** To what extent do you agree, or disagree, with the idea of developing a lorry holding area solution that reduces the need to activate Operation Stack during periods of cross-Channel disruption? (Please tick one box).

**Response:** Box for ticking, Strongly agree

- 1.11 **Question 7:** Taking account of the identified benefits and disadvantages set out in the brochure; do you have a preference for any of the following lorry holding area solutions? (Please tick one box).

**Response:** Box for ticking, I don't have a preference

- 1.12 **Question 8:** Where do you think that any new lorry holding areas should be located? (Please tick as many as appropriate).

**Response:** Box for ticking, Near the ports

- 1.13 **Question 9:** If you agree with a lorry holding area solution, do you have specific suggestions about where lorry holding areas could be located? If yes, please provide details below.

**Response:** Maidstone Borough Council would welcome early engagement on any lorry holding area solutions and any implications that will be created upon Maidstone's transport infrastructure.

Lorry holding areas should be sited close to the ports so as to prevent wide spread traffic congestion, and significant negative impacts on local communities, businesses and environmental/landscape along the M20.

- 1.14 **Question 18:** Is there anything else you want us to take into account?

**Response:** Maidstone Borough Council would welcome early engagement on any temporary or permanent traffic management measures for the M20. In considering any lorry holding area solutions the implications of congestion including air quality and the impacts on habitats should be considered and their impacts on Local Authorities.

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## **2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 Option A: the Committee could decide that no response to the Highways England public information exercise should be submitted.
- 2.2 Option B: the Committee could decide to submit responses to the Highways England public information exercise.

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## **3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Option B is the preferred option, since submitting a consultation response will ensure that the Council's viewpoint can be taken into account by Highways England in considering approaches to reducing congestion caused by cross-Channel disruption and its impact upon Maidstone Borough.

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#### 4. RISK

- 4.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.
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#### 5. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 5.1 Subject to the Committee's agreement, the council's response to the Highways England public information exercise will be submitted by 22 July 2018. Highways England have stated that should the scheme proceed the identified locations will be made available following the public information exercise, and that an options consultation would take place in winter 2018/19.
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#### 6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	<p>We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities.</p> <p>However, they will support the Council's overall requirement to have a 'duty to co-operate' with other prescribed bodies on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries.</p>	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning & Development
<b>Risk Management</b>	Already covered in the risk section.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning & Development
<b>Financial</b>	Responding to the Highways England public information exercise can be done within existing resources.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
<b>Staffing</b>	Responding to the Highways	Rob Jarman,

	England public information exercise can be done within existing resources.	Head of Planning & Development
<b>Legal</b>	There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.	Cheryl Parks, Mid Kent Legal Services (Planning)
<b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>	Responding to this consultation as recommended would not have specific implications for privacy and data protection.	Cheryl Parks, Mid Kent Legal Services (Planning)
<b>Equalities</b>	Responding to this consultation as recommended would not have specific or differential implications for the different communities within Maidstone.	Policy & Information Manager
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	Responding to this consultation as recommended would not have specific implications for Crime and Disorder in the borough.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning & Development
<b>Procurement</b>	Responding to this consultation as recommended does not require the procurement of any services, expertise or materials.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning & Development

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## 7. REPORT APPENDICES

The following document informs part of the report:

- Appendix 1: Solutions to Operation Stack, public information exercise questionnaire